



2023-24 ACT/SAT Appeals Guidance

September 2023

Important Updates:

- **New:**
 - Districts can submit appeals for students who were considered medically exempt from the ACT/SAT graduation requirement. Please see [section 2.1](#) for more information regarding how to appeal this issue.
 - Students who earned an alternate academic diploma (AAD) will be excluded from ACT/SAT participation rate calculations. 2023 graduates with a completion type of 8 (AAD) will be removed from the ACT/SAT data files.
- **Other Important Updates:**
 - Districts must submit ACT/SAT appeals using the [2023-24 ACT/SAT Appeals form](#). Email submissions will not be accepted.
 - All ACT/SAT appeals must be completed during this appeals window. ACT/SAT data will no longer be accepted during the *Ready Graduate* appeals process.

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Section 1: ACT/SAT Appeals Overview

The ACT/SAT appeals process allows districts to resolve ACT/SAT data issues in line with federal and state guidelines. Districts must be actively engaged in the ACT/SAT appeals process as ACT/SAT data is utilized for evaluating the *Ready Graduate* indicator for both schools and districts. Districts should review the appealable issues specified in [Section 2.1](#) as there are important updates to what can be appealed during the ACT/SAT appeals process.

ACT/SAT data included in accountability reflect **only** the students in the prior graduation cohort who earned an on-time traditional high school diploma¹ (four years plus a summer). Therefore, for the 2023-24 ACT/SAT appeals cycle, districts will submit appeals for the **2023 graduation cohort**. It is important to note that students count in a cohort based on the year they entered grade 9. Please consult the [2022-23 Graduation Cohort Protocol](#) on the Tennessee Department of Education (department) accountability webpage for more information on cohort data.

The ACT data subject to appeals have been reviewed in partnership with ACT to reflect a student's highest known composite score. Additionally, the department will take an extra step to identify student ACT records without a proper student identification number attaching them to a specific school and district. The process will involve matching records to district number, school number, student first name, student last name, and student date of birth data fields. If a higher score is found through the matching process, that score will be used in the ACT data files.

¹ Students must have completion codes of 1, 11, 12, or 13.

Section 2: Appeal Parameters and Required Documentation

2.1 Appealable Issues

Districts may only submit ACT/SAT appeals for 2023 graduates based on the parameters listed below:

- Missing ACT data
 - The district must have score reports and/or data files that contain valid ACT composite scores for students with missing score information in the student level file on the Accountability application.
- Higher ACT score
 - The district must have score reports and/or data files that contain valid ACT composite scores greater than the composite scores in the student level file on the Accountability application. The department will use the highest composite score and corresponding subtest scores earned during a single testing administration.
- SAT score
 - The district must have score reports and/or data files that contain valid SAT scores for students with missing score information in the student level file on the Accountability application.
- Medical exemption
 - The Tennessee State Board of Education updated the [High School Policy](#) for students to waive the ACT participation requirement due to medical exemption. The district must have the student's [medical exemption form](#) on file that shows that the student was unable to complete the ACT/SAT testing graduation requirement on both the junior testing day and the senior retake testing day. More information is [here](#).

2.2 Non-appealable Issues

Examples of non-appealable situations are provided below:

- ACT/SAT data for students who graduated in less than four years (i.e., early graduates)

For accountability purposes, early graduates are accounted for with their expected graduating cohort, which is four years after they entered grade 9, rather than the year they graduated. For instance, a student who entered grade 9 in 2019-20 was expected to graduate in 2022-23. If the student graduated in 2021-22 as an early graduate, the student's ACT data will be included in the 2022-23 ACT student level data file as 2022-23 is the year the student was expected to complete high school.

- Student demographic data
 - Student demographic data should have been updated in EIS as part of the graduation cohort process. Please consult the [2022-23 Graduation Cohort Protocol](#) on the Cohort application for more information.
- Higher individual subtest scores
 - The department will use the highest composite score and the corresponding subtest scores earned during a single testing administration. Higher individual subtest scores are not appealable because the department does not use superscores² for accountability.

² A superscore is the average of one's best subject scores from all ACT test attempts.

2.3 Required Documentation

For appealable issues, districts must provide supporting documentation. The following types of documentation will be accepted:

- ACT/SAT Score Appeals
 - Data files from ACT or SAT that include student identification information for the appealed student(s), including the student's first name, student's last name, and student's date of birth.
 - Student score reports or score labels from ACT or SAT that include student identification information for the appealed student(s), including the student's first name, student's last name, ACT ID, and student's date of birth.
 - If neither of the above are available, the department will accept a screenshot of the student's MyACT.org account that provides the student's first and last name, student's date of birth, and visible ACT scores including the composite and all subtest scores.
- Medical Exemption Appeals
 - A completed [medical exemption form](#)

The department **will not** consider the following types of documentation:

- Transcripts that list ACT or SAT scores
- Student Information System screenshots of students' recorded scores
- Letters from schools or families stating scores

Section 3: Appeals Timeline

The appeals submission window for 2023-24 ACT/SAT data opens on **October 16, 2023**, and closes on **October 27, 2023**. The table below shows the dates and times for each milestone as well as the delivery medium. All appeals should be submitted using the [2023-24 ACT/SAT Appeals form](#). See [Section 4](#) for more guidance on appeal submissions.

As shown in the table, all appeals along with the required documentation as specified in [Section 2.3](#) must be submitted by **11:59 p.m. CT on Friday, October 27, 2023**. Districts will receive an initial appeals response on **November 6, 2023**. Districts will then have the opportunity to correct any issues that resulted in an initial denial during the review and remediation window (**November 7-8, 2023**). Districts will receive final letters regarding the appeal decision from the department on **November 10, 2023**. The ACT/SAT data file will be finalized and released on the Accountability application on **November 10, 2023**.

Important Reminder: Districts must review and complete all ACT/SAT appeals during the ACT/SAT appeals window following the timeline below. Districts are no longer able to submit ACT/SAT appeals during the *Ready Graduate* process.

Date	Time	Milestone	Delivery Medium
Monday, October 16, 2023	8 a.m. CT	Release of student-, school-, and district- level ACT/SAT data files to districts for review and submit appeal as appropriate Appeals window opens	Accountability Application
Friday, October 27, 2023	11:59 p.m. CT	Appeals window closes	Appeals and acceptable documentation should be submitted using the 2023-24 ACT/SAT Appeals form
Monday, November 6, 2023	5 p.m. CT	Initial response letter sent to districts and published on the Accountability application	Appeal responses will be sent from TNED.Graduates@tn.gov
Tuesday, November 7, 2023 - Wednesday, November 8, 2023	11:59 p.m. CT	Review and remediation window	Appeals and acceptable documentation should be submitted using the 2023-24 ACT/SAT Appeals form
Friday, November 10, 2023	5 p.m. CT	Data finalized and released on Accountability application	Accountability Application
Friday, November 10, 2023	5 p.m. CT	Final appeal response letter sent to districts and published on the Accountability application	Appeal responses will be sent from TNED.Graduates@tn.gov

Section 4: Appeals Submission Process

During the ACT/SAT Appeals submission window, all appeals must be submitted before **11:59 p.m. CT on October 27, 2023**. Districts must complete the following for their ACT/SAT appeals to be reviewed:

- An appeal letter on district letterhead explaining the appealable issues; the letter must be signed by the director of schools;
- Score reports and/or data files that meet the appealable criteria as specified in [Section 2.3](#);
- Completed [ACT Appeals Submission Worksheet](#);
- Submitted appeal using 2023-24 ACT/SAT Appeals form.

4.1 ACT Appeals Submission Worksheet

The [ACT Appeals Submission Worksheet](#) must be complete and correct. Please follow the submission instructions closely to expedite appeals processing.

The following are instructions on how to complete and save the [ACT Appeals Submission worksheet](#):

Step 1: Download the [ACT Appeals Submission Worksheet](#).

Step 2: Fill out the "Contact_Info" Tab.

- Enter a valid date in cell B2 (format: MM/DD/YYYY).
- Enter your district number in cell B3.
 - This should automatically populate your district name, director's name, and director's email address.
 - Contact the department at TNED.Graduates@tn.gov if any of the automated information is incorrect.
- Enter the name of the person who serves as the point of contact for ACT data in cell B7.
- Enter the email address of the ACT data point of contact in cell B8.
- Enter the phone number (numbers only) for the ACT data point of contact in cell B9.
- Enter the appropriate phone extension in cell D9, if applicable.

Step 3: Fill out the "District_Appeals" tab.

- Enter the first student's state ID number into cell A2.
 - If you have correctly completed the "Contact_Info" tab, your district number and district name will automatically populate.
- Enter the school number for the first student in cell D2.
 - You can find the school number in the Cohort application and downloadable files.
- Enter the student's last name in cell E2, student's first name in cell F2, and student's middle name in G2.
- Enter the student's ACT English subscore in H2, ACT Math subscore in I2, ACT Reading subscore in J2, ACT Science subscore in K2, and the ACT composite score in L2.
 - Please note, superscores are not acceptable appeals. The subscores and composite score must be from the same ACT testing session.
- Enter the evidence of ACT score attachment name in M2. **This should be the student's individual ACT report or ACT label.**
- Enter the date the student completed the ACT session in N2 (MMYY).
- Enter the student's ACT ID in cell O2
- IF** you are submitting a student's SAT score, enter the SAT total in P2, SAT math subscore in Q2, and SAT Reading subscore in R2.

- i. Repeat steps A-H for any remaining students.

Step 4: Save the [ACT Appeals Submission Worksheet](#) as an excel file.

- a. Save the file using the following naming convention: “###_Appeals_Submission_Worksheet” where “###” is your district number.
- b. Submit only one Appeals Submission Worksheet per district.
- c. If you are unable to locate your district and school number, please consult any of the files on the Accountability application or search the [School Directory page](#).

4.2 Submission Form

Districts must submit ACT/SAT appeals using the [2023-24 ACT/SAT Appeals form](#) by **11:59 p.m. CT on Friday, October 27, 2023**. The person submitting the appeals form must have an Orion/SSO account in order to submit the form. Districts must submit the following information:

- District Number
- District Name
- Name and Email of person submitting form
- Director of Schools Name
- Director of Schools Email
- ACT/SAT Appeals Letter signed by the Director of Schools
 - must be submitted as a PDF file with the naming convention “**District Name ACT Appeals Letter**”
- [ACT Appeals Worksheet](#)
 - must be submitted as an Excel file with the naming convention “**###_Appeals_Submission_Worksheet**” where ### is the district number
- Supporting Documentation
 - must be submitted as an excel or PDF file with the naming convention “**###_StudentDocumentation**” where ### is the district number
 - **Important Note:** documentation must be provided for each student being appealed. Failure to include supporting documentation will result in a denial.

Districts must submit all ACT/SAT appeals as well as the acceptable documentation before **11:59 p.m. CT on Friday, October 27, 2023**. Any documentation submitted past the timeline will be denied. If you need assistance submitting the [2023-24 ACT/SAT Appeals form](#), please email TNEducation@tn.gov.

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